

I am Kelly Oates, kelly@oates.com, and I approve of this fanzine.

Which surprises me, because I'm normally unamused by cliché, and because I never imagined I'd write a fanzine. How? Why?

As to how....

Not long ago, I was at a dreadfully boring party. I looked for something to read on the end table next to me, as one does. The third readable thing down in the pile furthest from me, under recent copies of *Cosmopolitan* and *Real Simple*, was a catalog tracing the fan activity of Robert Lichtman. What a bloomin' godsend! Until that night, I only knew fanzines as rock music commentary. There on the end table, I found a door into a pocket universe stretching back more than ninety years. After examining the portal, I've decided to try to enter.

In the process of deciding, my brain, as is does, got caught up in research. Online reference materials about science fiction fanzines are plentiful but often (usually?) outdated. I've spent weeks going through wikis, books, articles, and fanzines, putting a picture together, getting more and more excited. Joining this party at the 2nd to the last hour, it looks like a new fanzine might find an audience in three ways: it can be shared on efanzines.com, it can be sent along with a letter of comment to fanzine editors, and/or it can be shared in an APA. I'm hoping to choose option d), all of the above. If you are reading this, it probably found you in one of those ways.

So, I'm going to start reading and replying to fanzines, and I want to find an APA. Preferably a venerable one. I like old things. Towards that end, I started with Lichtman's *The Amateur Press Associations in Science-Fiction Fandom*. Elephant Graveyards and Nasty Bastards do not appeal to me, and many of the other APAs in Bob's list seem to have run down the curtain and joined the choir invisible. I found an article in *Fancyclopedia* 3, current as of 2021, that suggests SAPS is still alive. Amongst the listed members, I recognized Andy Hooper from efanzines.com and found his email address in one of his fanzines. I reached out to him. He suggested I join. I'm on.

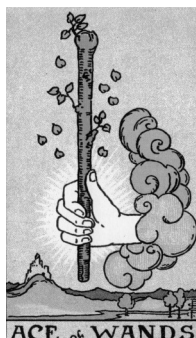
As to why....

I don't know about yours, but my life oscillates a lot. My pre-twenties were volatile because I was dealt the default problematic hand and had no idea what was going on. Family, school, peers: none of that made sense, and much of it seemed hostile. It took me into my mid-twenties to right the ship of self. My post-twenties have also been volatile, with greater highs and lows, but increasingly slow-moving changes. At the time of the dreadfully boring party, I was down at the bottom of a long

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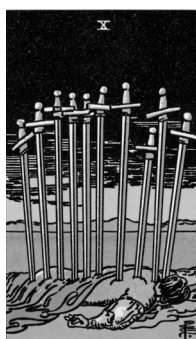


wave. I'm getting better at how to deal with down times without suffering too much: I do things like abandoning, withdrawing, and simplifying. I got to a place that was infrequently disturbed, infrequently delighted, patiently waiting.

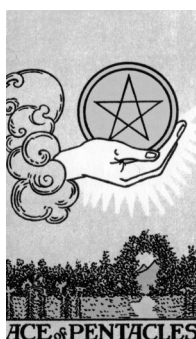
From the point of view of the I Ching (which I have been interacting with since the onset of my so-called adulthood), these cycles are the nature of things. The trick of life seems to be to learn how to accept and react to cycles in ways that align with your integrity and true nature. The I Ching's answer to my question "OK, what should I make of this fanzine stuff?", was very very welcome (for those of you into the I Ching, it was [42 (1,4) – 11], as represented on the title page of this zine). Nothing could have been more encouraging. The contextual hexagram (11 : 泰) represents safety, security, peace, and progress. It's like water flowing to great and healthy effect, the blessings of spring, rising from low to high. Le Guin's commentary is about wheels, pots, and rooms, and points out that the materials these things are built from are not the useful parts of the things. The starting hexagram (42 : 益) suggests a time of the sort of increase that can only happen after diminishment. All that down time was a period of taking apart the old and preparing the new. Now, says the oracle, is the time of steady rain and blooming, which I can find via fandom.



To be clear, I don't think the I Ching sends me messages from some unseen authority. What it does is, it answers questions in ways that encourages me to adopt a conversational attitude. It's obscure enough that there's room to interpret its answers. The interpretation suggests more questions. It's internally consistent, so it supports ongoing interaction without seeming random. This all tricks me into creating the voice of a mentor out of it. The mentor is, of course, a projection of my own subconsciousness. Which is exactly the point: for questions that take understanding rather than doing, the I Ching is a great tool. You might also use ChatGPT, but it's only been tuned for a few years, whereas the I Ching has been tuned for a few millenia.



After a decade and more of using the I Ching, I started using the Tarot to augment the pragmatic voice of the I Ching with something more metaphorical. When asked this same question, the Tarot was quite encouraging about new beginnings, too, especially in some creative area or the other, and even more especially because the change will happen in the context of security and external stability. There are hints of karmic justice and hitting bottom as a sort of underpinning, dark views of the recent past and/or the coming path, which again match my understanding of my situation. So, I find a kind of certainty that this is a good idea, and here I go.



An Oates Recipe

This recipe is easy to scale up. It's also good for oneself of a morning.

- ▶ Gather 1 ripe banana, 2 large eggs, 1/3 cup steel cut oats, and 1/4 tsp cinnamon per person.
- ▶ Mash the banana with a fork, add the eggs, and mix until combined.
- ▶ Use a blender to chop the oats into a rough flour. Add them and the cinnamon to the nascent banana/egg-form. Mix well.
- ▶ Use whatever sort of skillet and fat you'd use to cook pancakes (because you are). Heat the skillet until it's hot enough that when you drop little bits of water into it, they dance. Pour 1/4 cup of batter per pancake. Cook for 1 1/2 minute. Flip. Cook more. Serve with maple syrup.



Another Oates Recipe

As cookie recipes do, this one just gets more complicated when scaled.

- ▶ Gather 1 ripe banana, 1 cup rolled oats, 1/2 cup dried fruit, and chopped candied ginger to taste.
- ▶ Mash together thoroughly. Let it all rest while the oven heats up.
- ▶ Drop by the spoonful onto a cookie sheet, suitably guarded by whatever technique you use while making cookies. Bake at 350°F for ten minutes per sheet.



North of the Kawartha Lakes

Imagine, if you will, a concurrence of climate change, rapid evolution, and rewilding in urban areas. That moment when I looked into the waters of the Don River from a single lane bridge in suburban Toronto and witnessed the reddi building of spawning Chinook salmon. But, surely these are Pacific salmon, I thought. My research tells of the extirpation of Atlantic salmon in the Great Lakes in 1898 (and of their restock and subsequent return) with various sub species of Pacific salmon introduced during the next hundred years. There were crowds of spectators watching the salmon leaping up, and up, and over the weir on the Humber River at Bloor Street. Wading folks were line casting in the shallows, but nothing like I have seen in Alaska, where anglers are shoulder to shoulder on the bank and one can traverse a stream on the backs of the fish.



I am sure there were coho, as well as pink salmon. I am often content with species names as I have yet to master proper binomial identifiers for all the things (excepting certain ancient reptilians) – what could be challenging about *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*? Imagine my delight as my Canadian adventures introduced me to the Zephyrophores: to be carried by a breeze, so poetic.



I first noticed these creatures while being dripped upon, on a cloudless evening, in cottage country north of the Niagara Escarpment. The wetness was more gooey than gummy, even squishy. I shone my trusty black light skyward, where clumps were quite responsive, giving a cerulean pulsation against the indigo twilight. Sure enough, beachball sized gelatinous globs and blobs gently glowed as they congregated in the lower branches of the spruce. I later learned it was most likely the zephyrophore *nyctalops ontarium* v *gargantium*. Memorable, especially the gargantium part.

Tropospheric, crepuscular, big, and drippy are not the first things that come to mind when considering the jellyfish. I conjure an elegantly buoyant, occasionally venomous creature floating in the oceanic plankton, drifting into the great lakes, now rising into the air. The small

by-the-wind sailors, *velella velella*, a lone species with its singular blue sail that raft together in their thousands, suggests a pathway for aeolian transmogrification. Then again perhaps zephyrophores evolved from the upside-down genus *Cassiopea* that lie on lagoon bottoms and pulsate gently with their umbrella top facing down while they follow the morning light from their swampy mangrove shelters. There are other aggregating species that follow the sun over the course of a day -- the moon and golden scyphozoans in Jellyfish Lake in Palau. There is the cosmopolitan, or peach blossom, freshwater jellyfish, which is less than 2.5cm in diameter, colorless and does not sting. Who knew? They originated in the Yangtze River drainage and are now distributed worldwide (but for the arctic). The fully arboreal zephyrophore *nyctalops ontarium* appears to be closely related being both translucent and non-stinging although *nyctalops ontarium* v. *gargantum* is considerably larger, at up to 1 meter across.

Not all jellies swim, some use their tentacles to “walk” on algal fronds and rocks. Deep-sea species living in benthic zones attach to seaweed holdfasts or materials anchored to the substratum. Hence the zephyrophorae settle on lower tree branches and take temporary shelter under building overhangs where their nearly invisible tentacles, although considerably denser, are easily confused with spider webbing. I



like to imagine there is a bumbling gang of *zephyrophore v gargantium* that joyride the updrafts over Niagara Falls and poop on people.

Biologists may be concerned regarding the current bloom and proliferation of *zephyrophorae*. If conditions remain ripe, in addition to the lakes of the deranged drainage on the Canadian shield, *nyctalops ontarium* is on course to seed the entirety of the inland waters north to Nunavut. The recent crash in the Great Lakes bat population means the jellies presently complement, rather than compete, for that ecological niche. These airborne hydrozoans consume floating pollens, lichens, insects, and prefer spiders (especially when sessile). Even my trusty pocket black light (broad spectrum in the 395-nanometer range, also good for scorpions and uranium glass), is sufficient to illuminate the hundreds of *nyctalops ontarium* as they loft and 'ride' crepuscular breezes over bog, stream, and lakeshore to forage black flies and the well named mosquitoes *aedes excrucians* and *anopheles punctipennis*.

Certain stories I heard in Ontario's cottage country embrace the arboreal jellyfish, but in the context of alien invasions, as such stories do. We can be assured that large clusters of breeding clouds of bioluminescent *zephyrophore*, particularly variation *gargantium*, are responsible. You know how scientific expositions can make details radiant? Consider a nocturnal summer procreative omphali where mature jellies flash chromatophores filled with luciferase, bobbling in their hundreds. The eldritch glow must be responsible for innumerable flying saucer sightings. Imagine pulsating entrained flashing, followed by effulgent mists of drifting, glowing spawn.

And there you have it...

Andy was quite kind and sent ecopies of many of your zines. I read them, then had a think about whether or not to reply to some of them in this my introductory submission. I decided not to, partly because I'm out of space-time, but more because I want our first interaction to be mutual rather than one-sided. I also want to send this to people who are not in the APA, so I think I will submit two zines once I get rolling, a general thing like this and then a SAPS-specific thing that has nothing but mailing comments. I'll find out as I go.

The writing here is all from my own fingers. The font is Trinite. The images are sourced from the internet and/or my camera. The black-and-white conversions and other photo editing is in Photoshop Express.

Looking forward to interacting again....

